

## BOOK NOTICES

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL. 1992. **Neem. A Tree for Solving Global Problems.** (ISBN 0-309-04686-6, pbk). National Academy Press, Washington, DC. No price given. 141 pp.

An Asiatic member of the mahogany family, neem (*Azadirachta indica*) is a current wonder plant being touted for an impressive variety of uses: reforestation, pharmaceuticals (the tree has been called "the village pharmacy"), biocides (against phytophagous insects, nematodes, snails, an ostracod, certain fungi, and some viruses, but non-toxic to humans), source of a fixed oil, fertilizers, timber, fuel, twigs for toothbrushes, and contraceptives—especially as a spermicide. This book summarizes data on the tree and discusses the need for and approach to further investigation of neem. Worldwide research contacts and about 110 references are listed. This is another excellent report from the U.S. Board on Science and Technology for International Development.—*John W. Thieret.*

DAVIS, LINDA W. 1993. **Weed Seeds of the Great Plains.** (ISBN 0-7006-0651-3, hbk). University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS. \$25.00 (plus \$3.00 shipping and handling). 145 pp.

The particular glory of this book is the 280 superb color photos of various seeds grouped, six per page, into 48 full-page plates. Additionally, the work gives detailed descriptions of these seeds, each description accompanied by a life-size silhouette photo of its subject. "Finding lists," essentially an unconventional key, help in identification. Included, too, are a list of some other books useful in seed identification; a glossary, with many terms illustrated; and an index to common and scientific names.—*John W. Thieret.*

GUNTER, PETE A.Y. 1993. **The Big Thicket. An Ecological Reevaluation.** (ISBN 0-929398-52-1, pbk). University of North Texas Press, Denton, TX. \$14.95. 229 pp.

In far southeastern Texas is the Big Thicket, that wild and fascinating region written about in this book. Pete Gunter tells of the history and biological diversity of the area, much of which has now been spared further destruction: the Big Thicket National Preserve was created in 1974, "a testimony to the persistence and vision of many people." (Too late, though, for the presumably now-extinct ivory-billed woodpecker, probably the most heralded member of the region's fauna.) About one-quarter of the book is "A user's guide," which should be read by anyone planning a visit to the preserve. An appendix lists "Representative flora and fauna of the Big Thicket," a bibliography and an index close the book.—*John W. Thieret.*